

**EUROPEAN UNION INFLUENCE ON VIOLENT ETHNIC CONFLICT IN EUROPE:
CASE STUDIES OF NORTHERN IRELAND, PAÍS VASCO, AND FYR MACEDONIA**

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ABSTRACT

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European Union Influence on Violent Ethnic Conflict in Europe: Case Studies of Northern Ireland, País Vasco, and FYR Macedonia

(Under the direction of Milada Anna Vachudova)

Throughout history, Europe has been the site of numerous and enduring ethnic conflicts. Since the mid-twentieth century, the European Union (EU) has increased both its size and policymaking competency, but does not have the authority to solve domestic conflicts in member states. Despite this, it can still have influence on paramilitary domestic ethnic conflict in Europe, primarily through providing a change of context and facilitating cooperation between conflicting parties, and this influence is consistent with previously established conflict solving strategies. However, EU influence is not uniform across member states, and its effectiveness will depend on the domestic context of the conflict. The ways in which the EU can influence ethnic conflict in member states differ from the ways it can do so in candidate states. In candidate states, the EU is more overt and applies direct pressure through accession conditionality, and this influence is also consistent with conflict solving strategies.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DPA	Democratic Party of Albania [Macedonia]
DUI	Democratic Union for Integration [Macedonia]
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party [Northern Ireland]
EA	Eusko Alkartasuna (Basque Solidarity) [País Vasco]
EP	European Parliament
ETA	Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (Basque Homeland and Freedom) [País Vasco]
EU	European Union
EuE	Euskal Ezkerra (Basque Left) [País Vasco]
EUPOL	European Union Police Mission
FDI	foreign direct investment
FYR	Former Yugoslav Republic
GDP	gross domestic product
IRA	Irish Republican Army [Northern Ireland]
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
MEP	Member of European Parliament
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NLA	National Liberation Army [Macedonia]
PDP	Party for Democratic Prosperity [Macedonia]
PNV	Partido Nacionalista Vasco (Basque Nationalist Party) [País Vasco]
SAA	Stabilization and Association Agreement
SDLP	Social Democratic and Labour Party [Northern Ireland]

INTRODUCTION

Europe's history is full of conflict – from warring tribes to competing empires and rival nation states and all phases in between. Following the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, the concept of the sovereign nation state has continually posed problems to Europe's complex ethnic geography, oftentimes producing conflict within the borders of a single nation state. Even today, conflicts between ethnic groups within single nation states persist, sometimes resulting in demands for increased autonomy or for secession. Some conflicts, like those between the Catalans and Spain or the Scots and the United Kingdom, have a non-violent character (at least in the modern era). Others, however, have resulted in paramilitary violence. In this thesis, I study conflicts in Europe that have arisen between a state and an ethnic minority that has turned to the use of paramilitary violence in its struggle.

Since the Treaty of Rome was signed in 1957, the European Union (EU) has grown in size and its competency over important areas of policymaking. In many areas – especially those related to the regulation of the economy – member states have pooled their sovereignty in the EU's institutions. However, resolving domestic conflict remains squarely under the authority of the member states. Nevertheless, ethnic minorities seeking greater autonomy or independence have called on the EU, seeing it as a potential ally against the national government. I show in this thesis how and under what conditions the EU has had an impact

on domestic conflicts between governments and minorities. I also explore whether the EU's influence fits into existing theories about how conflicts may be mitigated or solved.

In my analysis, I explore what influence, whether direct or indirect, the EU has had on domestic ethnic conflicts that specifically include nationalist paramilitary groups. When scholars consider strategies for solving violent ethnic conflict, they privilege mediation and peace negotiations since these are the most public and well-known methods. However, since this does not fall within the EU's competence, it has not taken this role in ethnic conflicts within its own member states. However, I argue that there are other ways that the EU can have influence on these conflicts, and, whether intended or not, this influence is consistent with existing theory on solving ethnic conflict.

Overall, the EU is able to achieve two main effects through its influence: increased cooperation and a change of context. In my case studies, the EU record is mixed. EU influence depends on how parties and governments use the tools and experience of European integration. The EU has been able to influence both conflicting member states and ethnic communities to cooperate. In member states, the EU primarily encourages cross-community cooperation through economic and social programs, and influences cooperation between member states through continued interaction at the EU level. European integration provides a change of context by changing the patterns of interaction between member states and giving conflicting parties new issues and arenas for debate. However, the EU has not been able to positively influence ethnic conflict situations in all cases. I argue that the EU is more influential in member states where the ethnic minority is not only fighting the state but also other ethnic groups in the same area.

I also show that the EU can influence conflicts within candidate states more effectively than conflicts within member states. After all, candidate states are subject to the EU's leverage; governments that want to qualify for EU membership may be willing to have the EU mediate their conflict – indeed they may welcome its interference. Once again, the EU is able to influence conflicting parties to cooperate towards a new goal: EU membership. This new goal provides a change of context for the conflict. Within candidate states, the EU takes a more overtly active role, using potential membership as tool for reform. As in member states, I argue that this influence in candidate states can also fit into existing theory on solving ethnic conflict.

I provide evidence for these arguments through three case studies: the Irish in Northern Ireland, the Basques in Spain's País Vasco (Basque Country), and the Albanians in the Former Yugoslav Republic (FYR) of Macedonia. I have selected these case studies based on three criteria: 1) There is/was an active paramilitary group that is/was largely considered to be a terrorist group [the Irish Republican Army (IRA), Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA), and the National Liberation Army (NLA), respectively]. 2) This group has a connection, either explicit or implicit, to a political party [Sinn Féin, Batasuna, and the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI)]. 3) There is a cross-border dimension to the conflict (United Kingdom-Ireland, Spain-France, and Macedonia-Albania-Kosovo). I have selected these cases because of their radical nature. In all three cases, paramilitary groups took action prior to the beginning of EU accession in each nation state.¹ Previous research

¹The United Kingdom originally applied for the EU in 1961, but was unsuccessful due to French concerns over the UK's political will to join. The UK reapplied in 1967. Ireland applied in 1967 and entered the EU in 1973 at the same time as the UK. This time period was also the beginning of "the Troubles" in Northern Ireland, although the original manifestation of the IRA predated Ireland's independence in 1921. Spain applied for the EU in 1962, but the EU never formally addressed the application over incompatibilities between Franco's regime and the EU. Spain applied once again in 1977, almost twenty years after ETA's formation, and joined the EU in 1986.

has emphasized the impact that the EU can have with political moderates in conflict areas.² Whether or not the EU can help demobilize radical groups such as these, however, remains unclear.

Previous research widely neglects what kind of influence the EU can have (or has had) on violent ethnic conflict within its current member states. Much of the literature that deals with the relationship between these areas and the EU focuses on economic and social factors but does not tend to link them to the ethnic conflicts there. I hope to help fill this gap through my Northern Ireland and Basque case studies. The main purpose of the Macedonia case study is to highlight the contrast between EU efforts within member states and within candidate states. While the EU may be able to play a role in attenuating violent conflict in member and candidate states, I show that the strategies used in pursuit of this goal have differed.

For each case, I sketch the EU's direct and indirect influence. I show its influence in three specific areas: political, economic, and cross-border relations. To measure the EU's political influence, I look at EU involvement in peace negotiations, EU influence on nationalist parties (with special attention to those connected with the paramilitary groups), and the use of EU regional institutions. To assess the EU's economic influence, I examine what, if any, consequences, benefits, or incentives regarding the conflicts have arisen from EU economic involvement. Lastly, I also look at how the EU has affected cross-border relations in each case.

This thesis is divided into three sections. In the first, I will detail previous literature relating to the EU and its influence on ethnic conflict. Given the emphasis that is placed on

²Diez, Thomas, Mathias Albert, and Stephan Stetter (eds) (2008) *The European Union and Border Conflicts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

the decreasing significance of the modern nation state, the EU is often considered very closely connected to globalization. Theory on the effect of globalization on ethnic conflict is inconclusive. Theory that focuses on the EU in particular maintains a focus outward from the EU rather than inward. The second section introduces existing conflict solving strategies with reference to the understanding of the causes of ethnic conflict that produce these strategies. Also in this section, I detail how EU action can fit in with this framework by identifying what specific aspects of conflict solving strategy I examine in my political, economic, and cross-border dimensions. In the final section, I turn to the case studies of EU influence in Northern Ireland, País Vasco, and Macedonia.

CHAPTER I

THE EU: A CATALYST OR DETERRENT FOR ETHNIC CONFLICT?

Previous literature on globalization and European integration is not conclusive when it comes to assessing the EU's effect on ethnic conflict in general. There exist many very diverse arguments about whether and how globalization impacts ethnic conflict. Scholars argue that globalization increases ethnic conflict,³ helps mitigate it,⁴ or has little effect on it at all.⁵ For its part, the EU is considered "intimately related" to the process of globalization, "part and parcel of an age that renders strict territorial delineations and borders obsolete."⁶ All three conflicts that I examine have roots that trace farther back in time than the onset of what we consider globalization, so it cannot be argued that globalization has served as their catalyst. However, since each situation – whether a peace agreement is in place or not – remains extremely sensitive, globalization has apparently not made concerns about territory or autonomy less relevant.

³Lobell, Steven E. and Philip Mauceri (2004) "Diffusion and Escalation of Ethnic Conflict" in *Ethnic Conflict and International Politics: Explaining Diffusion and Escalation*, edited by Steven E. Lobell and Philip Mauceri. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 1-9; 7-8.; Muller, Jerry Z. (2008) "Us and Them: The Enduring Power of Ethnic Nationalism." *Foreign Affairs* 87(2): 18-35.

⁴Rosecrance, Richard and Arthur Stein (2008) "Separatism's Final Country" in "Responses: Is Ethnic Conflict Inevitable: Parting Ways over Nationalism and Separatism." *Foreign Affairs* 87(3): 141-145; 143; Sadowski, Yahya (1998) "Ethnic conflict." *Foreign Policy* 111: 12-23; 20.

⁵Esman, Milton J. (2004) *An Introduction to Ethnic Conflict*. Cambridge: Polity; 23-25.

⁶Diez, Albert, and Stetter, 149-150.

Research related to European integration and ethnic conflict has several common themes. Many agree that European integration has contributed to what some call the resurgence of regional identities.⁷ Globalization and integration have made it “no longer possible to study territorial politics without taking full account of activities, policies, decisions and relationships beyond the state.”⁸ One result of this resurgence of regions is a number of EU-level regional organizations and mechanisms.⁹ However, regional mobilization has not been uniform across Europe. Some regional groups fear that the development of regions will lead to a loss of competency over issues that used to be part of their jurisdiction. Others seek to use the EU as a source of political and economic resources, possibly also as a new arena to express their nationalist aspirations.¹⁰ Thus far, studies have shown that even though the EU can empower regional governments, it has not had this effect universally across the EU.¹¹ Despite this, others have argued that regionalist political parties remain consistently pro-EU,¹² possibly indicating their faith in (or aspirations for) EU-level regional outlets.

⁷Paasi, Anssi (2009) “The resurgence of the ‘Region’ and ‘Regional Identity’: theoretical perspectives and empirical observations on regional dynamics in Europe.” *Review of International Studies* 35: 121-146; 145.

⁸Bourne, Angela K. (2003) “Introduction: The Domestic Politics of Regionalism and European Integration.” *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 4(3): 347-362; 349.

⁹*Ibid.*, 349-350.

¹⁰Keating, Michael and Liesbet Hooghe (1996) “By-passing the nation state? Regions and the EU policy process” in *European Union: power and policy-making*, edited by Jeremy J. Richardson. London: Routledge; 217-218.

¹¹Marks, Gary, François Nielsen, Leonard Ray, and Jane E. Salk (1996) “Competencies, Cracks, and Conflicts: Regional Mobilization in the European Union.” *Comparative Political Studies* 29(2): 164-192; 189.

¹²Jolly, Seth Kincaid. (2007) “The Europhile Fringe?: Regionalist Party Support for European Integration.” *European Union Politics* 8(1): 109-130; 124.

Studies of EU involvement in dealing with ethnic conflict thus far have primarily focused on conflicts taking place outside of the EU.¹³ Taking European integration as a microcosm for globalization, Anamaria Dutceac argues that the EU promotes a value system based on democracy and tolerance, thus creating an environment for ethnic coexistence.¹⁴ Similarly, Zsuzsa Csargo and James Goldgeier argue that the EU provides a framework for nation building that can incorporate conflicting nationalisms and make instability less likely.¹⁵ However, both research projects focused outward from the EU, concentrating on the process of EU accession. It remains unclear whether the EU would have the same, if any, effect on current EU members.

Of the few who have looked at EU influence on ethnic conflict resolution within EU member states,¹⁶ none have attempted to explore whether or not EU influence fits in with established ethnic conflict solving theory, which will be detailed in the next section. Thomas Diez, Mathias Albert, and Stephan Stetter's volume examines pathways for EU influence in "border conflicts," achieved through European integration. The island of Ireland serves as

¹³For examples, see the following: Cameron, Fraser and Rosa Balfour (2006) "The European Neighborhood Policy as a conflict prevention tool." EPC Issue Paper No. 47. <http://www.conflictprevention.net/library/documents/thematic_issues/prevention_tool___epc_issue_paper_47.pdf>; Eralp, Doga Ulas and Nimet Beriker (2005) "Assessing the Conflict Resolution Potential of the EU: The Cyprus Conflict and EU Accession Negotiations." *Security Dialogue* 36(2): 175-192; Tocci, Nathalie (2004) "EU Intervention in Ethno-political Conflicts: The Cases of Cyprus and Serbia-Montenegro." *European Foreign Affairs Review* 9(4): 551-573; Tocci, Nathalie (2008) "The EU and Conflict Resolution in Turkey and Georgia: Hindering EU Potential Through the Political Management of Contractual Relations." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 46(4): 875-897; Van Houten, Pieter and Stefan Wolff (2008) "The Dynamics of Ethnopolitical Conflict Management by International Regional Organizations in Europe." *Journal of Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe* 1/2008. <http://www.ecmi.de/jemie/download/1-2008-Houten_Wolff.pdf>.

¹⁴Dutceac, Anamaria (2004) "Globalization and Ethnic Conflict: Beyond the Liberal-Nationalist Distinction." *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics* 3(2): 20-39.

¹⁵Csargo, Zsuzsa and James M. Goldgeier (2004) "Nationalist Strategies and European Integration." *Perspectives on Politics* 2(1): 21-37.

¹⁶See Bourne, Angela K. (2004) "European Integration and Conflict Resolution in the Basque Country, Northern Ireland, and Cyprus" in *The EU and Territorial Politics within Member States: Conflict or Co-operation?*, edited by Angela K. Bourne. Leiden: Brill; Diez, Albert, and Stetter.

one of their case studies, but the volume focuses strictly on conflict transformation and neglects other forms of conflict solving strategy. Even though the volume specifies four paths for EU influence (compulsory, enabling, connective, and constructive), it fails to satisfactorily connect the authors' own categories, and thus EU influence, to existing literature on conflict solving. Bourne's article is similar; while she reveals important ways that the EU has influence in Northern Ireland, the Basque Country, and Cyprus, she fails to connect this to existing literature. My analysis not only shows the ways the EU has affected each case study, but also explicitly evaluates EU influence based on previous literature on solving ethnic conflict.

CHAPTER II

CONFLICT SOLVING STRATEGIES AND THE EU'S POTENTIAL FOR INFLUENCE

Theories on how to deal with ethnic conflict generally fall into three categories – conflict management, conflict resolution, and conflict transformation – with some overlap between them. Different understandings of the causes of ethnic conflicts result in different strategies for solving them. These categories will now be described in turn, followed by an explanation of how EU influence fits into each of them.

DEALING WITH ETHNIC CONFLICT

Conflict management strategies arise from a subjectivist or pluralist understanding of ethnic conflict as the consequence of incompatible values, goals, and interests. This incompatibility is deep-seeded and unaffected by education, secularization, and modernization. Manipulative elites and identity politics only make this perceived incompatibility worse.¹⁷ As such, proponents of conflict management believe that conflict can only be managed and contained, not eliminated.¹⁸ These strategies are largely outcome-oriented and do not tend to address the root causes of the conflict.¹⁹ Conflict management is

¹⁷Horowitz, Donald L. (1985) *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press; 135-140; Oberschall, Anthony (2007) *Conflict and Peace Building in Divided Societies: Responses to ethnic violence*. Abingdon: Routledge; 11-12.

¹⁸Miall, 3.

¹⁹Reimann, 8.

most often achieved through negotiation. Negotiations involve a calculation of interests and working together toward some mutually profitable goal.²⁰

The conflict resolution approach focuses on the unsatisfied needs of conflicting groups. According to objectivist or modernization theory on the causes of ethnic conflict, these unsatisfied needs come from increased contact and thus increased competition between groups.²¹ Once again, manipulative elites and identity politics can play a role in fostering poor relations between groups.²² Conflict resolution is a process-oriented approach aimed at addressing the root causes of the conflict. Conflict resolution strategies attempt to reframe conflict as a “shared problem with mutually acceptable solutions.”²³ Conflicting parties are encouraged to work together to satisfy mutual needs, possibly reevaluating their interests in the process.²⁴ These strategies often include intervention by “skilled but powerless” third parties working to help conflicting parties reevaluate their positions and interests.²⁵ These strategies, however, do not necessarily reduce the power of manipulative elites.

Conflict transformation strategies spring from a mixed understanding of the causes of ethnic conflicts. They combine the attention that subjectivists draw to isolation between groups and the facility of system domination with the objectivist idea that conflicting groups can find shared goals and needs.²⁶ Yet again, manipulative elites and identity politics can fan

²⁰Ross, Marc Howard (2000) “Creating the conditions for peacemaking: theories of practice in ethnic conflict resolution.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 23(6): 1002-1034; 1011-1013.

²¹Horowitz, 97-135, 139-140.

²²Oberschall, 11-12.

²³Reimann, 9.

²⁴Ross, 1013-1014.

²⁵Miall, 3.

²⁶Horowitz, 139-140.

the fires.²⁷ Conflict transformation strategies are outcome-, structure-, and process-oriented and strive to develop constructive relationships between actors of unequal status.²⁸

Community relations are strengthened through the recognition and empowerment of marginalized groups.²⁹ Transformations can take place on multiple levels: context, structure, actor, issue, and personal/elite.³⁰ Since these strategies can empower the grassroots, conflict transformation is the only group of strategies out of these three that can dislodge manipulative elites and reduce the salience of identity politics.

POTENTIAL FOR EU INFLUENCE ON ETHNIC CONFLICT IN EUROPE

What are the likely pathways for EU influence? I argue that there are three general dimensions in which the EU can play a role in ethnic conflict, both inside and outside of the EU: political, economic, and cross-border relations. Elements of the conflict solving strategies described above can fit into each of these dimensions, as I explain below when I evaluate each dimension of influence. Even though I draw a distinction between these three dimensions, they are not exclusive to each other. For example, economic actions could potentially have political effects. I argue that EU actions within these categories can use similar methods and achieve similar effects as traditional conflict settlement approaches. However, I understand that the EU could potentially have a detrimental effect within each category.

²⁷Oberschall, 11-12.

²⁸Reimann, 10.

²⁹Ross, 1009-1011.

³⁰Miall, 10.

Within the political dimension, I look at three channels of influence. The first is EU participation in or influence on peace processes or negotiations. Does the EU act as a “powerless” third party? If so, is it really a “powerless” party? If it hasn’t directly mediated, how has it affected negotiations? Secondly, I look at what kind of influence the EU has had on the nationalist parties in question. Has EU integration (or accession) contributed to conflict resolution by causing these parties to reevaluate their interests? Has integration helped them to fulfill their needs? Lastly, I look at what impact EU regional mechanisms and tools have on the particular conflicts. I specifically evaluate whether EU regional and minority rights mechanisms can “empower the marginalized,” encourage cross-community cooperation, or help to meet the needs of the ethnic groups in question.

My analysis of the economic dimension is two-fold. I examine how EU membership or accession has affected the general economic situation for each case study. Additionally, I evaluate the effect of any specific economic assistance or funding directly related to conflict outcomes. In this analysis, I hope to evaluate two things. First, has economic influence resulted in a change in context along the lines of conflict transformation literature? Second, has economic influence helped to satisfy conflicting groups’ needs or has it created more competition between them?

The cross-border relations dimension is also two-fold. Here, I look at how European integration has affected both cooperation between the governments in question and co-ethnic connections across borders. Once again, European integration could affect the conflict by changing the context of these relationships and prompting a reevaluation of interests.

CHAPTER III

CASE STUDIES OF EU INFLUENCE ON VIOLENT DOMESTIC ETHNIC CONFLICT

I will now turn to my case studies. I first examine the conflict in Northern Ireland, then in País Vasco, and finally, in FYR Macedonia. I evaluate EU influence in each case study along the three dimensions described above, relating this influence to the three strategies of conflict solving.

NORTHERN IRELAND

In this case study, I evaluate EU influence on the conflict in Northern Ireland. I begin with a discussion of the peace process before turning to EU influence on the situation gained through the experience of integration. After this, I evaluate EU regional mechanisms, economic assistance, and cross-border initiatives with respect to the conflict. Finally, I examine how the EU has influenced the political parties of Northern Ireland, with particular attention paid to Sinn Féin, the nationalist political party with alleged ties to the IRA.

The peace process in Northern Ireland was tumultuous to say the least. For a long time, unionists like Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) leader Ian Paisley would not even agree to meet with Sinn Féin because of its alleged ties to the paramilitary organization known as the IRA. However, many parties, both nationalist and unionist, realized that a

workable solution would not be possible without the agreement of Sinn Féin and the IRA.³¹ After previous agreements, declarations, and failed attempts at negotiation, success finally came in the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. The Good Friday Agreement established a power-sharing structure for Northern Ireland's government and facilitated cooperation between Northern Ireland and London, Northern Ireland and Dublin, and London and Dublin.³² Although there have been some problems which resulted in the suspension of the Northern Ireland Assembly on a number of occasions,³³ the substance of the Agreement has remained unchanged and both sides have continued to negotiate on other matters, albeit with difficulty.³⁴ Implementation is also complicated because of the splits that have occurred within the IRA, some of them resulting from the Good Friday Agreement itself. The leaders of the Provisional IRA agreed to disarm following the Good Friday Agreement. The leaders of the Continuity IRA, Real IRA, and other paramilitary groups (including loyalist

³¹Indeed this close tie once existed, evidenced by prominent Irish republican Danny Morrison's famous phrase of pursuing republican goals via "the Armalite and the ballot box" [see Taylor, Peter (1997) *Behind the Mask: The IRA and Sinn Féin*. New York: TV Books; 327]. After the split between the Official IRA and the Provisional IRA, Sinn Féin was often considered as the political arm of the PIRA. During the 1970s, Bobby Sands, an IRA member imprisoned in Long Kesh prison (who later died during a hunger strike), won the 1981 Fermanagh-South Tyrone by-election, held as a result of the incumbent's death. Sands did not run on an official Sinn Féin ticket, but he was initially nominated to run by Sinn Féin members. This is really when the IRA began to work politically through Sinn Féin [see Moloney, Ed (2002) *A Secret History of the IRA*. New York: W.W. Norton; 210-214, and Coogan, Tim Pat (1997) *The Troubles: Ireland's Ordeal 1966-1996 and the Search for Peace*. Boulder: Roberts Reinehart Publishers; 234-239]. Because of the inherent connection, during any negotiation process, Sinn Féin would often be punished as a result of IRA actions. At the same time, the IRA would also frequently act in direct defiance to Sinn Féin when it undertook any actions the IRA disliked. By the time of the final peace process, however, Sinn Féin had begun to distance itself from the IRA, which will be detailed later in this paper.

³²MacGinty, Roger and John Darby (2002) *Guns and Government: The Management of the Northern Ireland Peace Process*. Basingstoke: Palgrave; 41.

³³BBC News (2002) "Assembly suspended over 'loss of trust,'" 14 October. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/2325833.stm>.

³⁴CNN (2010) "Leaders hail deal to save Northern Ireland power-sharing agreement," 5 February. <<http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/europe/02/05/northern.ireland.politics/>>.

paramilitary groups) were not part of the negotiations, did not all agree to disarm, and many have remained active.³⁵

The EU had limited direct involvement in the actual negotiation of the Northern Ireland peace process. There were no EU representatives present to help with mediation or advise the negotiating parties in the process.³⁶ Historically, British Governments insisted that Northern Ireland was an internal UK problem, and therefore outside of the jurisdiction of what was at that time the European Community. The European Commission and the European Council were happy to keep their distance, choosing to be supportive of any existing cooperation between the UK and Ireland on the matter and encouraging further cooperation.³⁷ In fact, before membership in the EU, Ireland opposed European involvement because of fear that any nationalist backlash in Northern Ireland would affect Ireland's EU candidacy. During the formal accession negotiations for both Ireland and the UK, the conflict in Northern Ireland was not directly mentioned at all, but Ireland did see European integration as a possible route to Irish reunification.³⁸ Violence between nationalist and paramilitary groups began to escalate around the same time as accession occurred. Within the peace process itself, the United States proved to be more directly influential than the EU. Former US Senator George Mitchell chaired the peace negotiations, and the Clinton

³⁵MacGinty and Darby, 104-105; Moloney, 72, 289, 479. For details of the Real IRA's and Continuity IRA's recent activity, see BBC News (2009a) "'Real IRA was behind army attack,'" 8 March. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/7930995.stm> and BBC News (2009b) "Continuity IRA shot dead officer," 10 March. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/7934426.stm>.

³⁶Kellas, James G. (2004) *Nationalist Politics in Europe: The Constitutional and Electoral Dimensions*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan; 29.

³⁷Kennedy, Dennis (ed) (2000) *Living with the European Union: The Northern Ireland Experience*. Basingstoke: Macmillan; 164-165; Ruane, Joseph and Jennifer Todd (1996) *The dynamics of conflict in Northern Ireland: Power, conflict and emancipation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 280-281.

³⁸Irvin, Cynthia L. (2000) "Negotiating End Games: A Comparative Analysis of the IRA and ETA" in *Reconcilable Differences: Turning Points in Ethnopolitical Conflict*, edited by Sean Byrne and Cynthia L. Irvin. West Hartford: Kumarian Press; 193; Ruane and Todd, 280.

administration's attention made the US the guarantor of the peace process. This enabled Sinn Féin to convince the IRA that if the British reneged, they would face substantial pressure from the US.³⁹ As far as the negotiations are concerned, it seems that the US – and not the EU – fulfilled the role of “powerless” third party. In this case, the EU has clearly not fulfilled a traditional conflict management role. It was not directly involved in negotiations and did not work from the assumption that unionist and nationalist values or interests were fundamentally incompatible.

This does not mean, however, that the EU completely ignored the conflict. In 1978, the Council created three European Parliament (EP) seats for Northern Ireland, a disproportionate number compared to the rest of the UK, widely understood as a way to give nationalists a voice in the EP.⁴⁰ During the 1980s, the EP took a growing interest in the conflict, attempting to act as a moral or political conscience of the EU, and held the first conflict-related debate on the 1981 hunger strike. In 1982, at the behest of John Hume, Member of European Parliament (MEP) from Northern Ireland's nationalist Social Democratic and Labor Party (SDLP), the EP established a fact-finding body to investigate the conflict, culminating in the Haagerup Report.⁴¹ In the report, the EP perceived the conflict as one between British and Irish identity. It also admitted that the EU's only competence in Northern Ireland was economic and social, not constitutional, so it could not step in and demand constitutional reform. Despite this, the Haagerup Report was believed

³⁹Irvin, 193.

⁴⁰Giving nationalists a public voice was considered extremely important. For a majority of the years from 1972 to 1998, the UK government instituted “direct rule” in Northern Ireland, meaning that Northern Ireland was ruled directly from Westminster, and the people of Northern Ireland had no input in choosing the individuals that administered Northern Irish affairs. Since the UK government more often than not sided with the unionists, nationalists had virtually no voice in how Northern Ireland was governed.

⁴¹Ruane and Todd, 281-282.

influential in leading the UK to adopt the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985.⁴² The Anglo-Irish Agreement provided a role for Ireland in conflict resolution in Northern Ireland. Many perceive both the Anglo-Irish Agreement and the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, along with the communication and institutions they established, to be modeled on the institutional framework of European integration.⁴³ Both of these documents, as well as the 1993 Downing Street Declaration⁴⁴ and the 1995 Framework Documents,⁴⁵ stressed their common membership in the EU.⁴⁶

Defining Northern Ireland as a European region remains difficult. Ireland has no officially recognized distinct regions, although at least six different representations of Irish regions exist. The UK, on the other hand, does have officially recognized regions, Northern Ireland commonly being one of them. For the Irish, membership in the EU has helped to create the connections to Northern Ireland that it sought, acknowledging “common interests but cultural and political diversity on the island in a way that gives greater strength and meaning to the concept of a united Irish nation and bypassing the zero-sum debate about its

⁴²Kennedy, 148-155.

⁴³Jesse, Neal G. and Kristen P. Williams (2005) *Identity and Institutions: Conflict Reduction in Divided Societies*. Albany: State University of New York Press; 107-110; O’Dowd, Liam (2007) “From empire to the European Union via the national state: the three ages of the Irish border” in *Geopolitics of European Union Enlargement: The fortress empire*, edited by Warwick Armstrong and James Anderson. Abingdon: Routledge; 43.

⁴⁴The Downing Street Declaration, a joint declaration from the British and Irish governments, reaffirmed the right to self-determination for the people of Northern Ireland. Should a majority vote to unite Northern Ireland to Ireland, this document ensured that the UK would not object. The document also opened the door for negotiations with parties linked to paramilitary groups (basically, with Sinn Féin), provided that they distance themselves from paramilitary activities.

⁴⁵The Framework Documents, consisting of “A New Framework for Agreement” and “A Framework for Accountable Government in Northern Ireland,” committed the Irish and British governments to a framework for continued negotiation among Northern Ireland’s political parties and laid out potential solutions to the conflict.

⁴⁶Hayward, Katy and Anjtte Wiener (2008) “The influence of the EU towards conflict transformation on the island of Ireland” in *The European Union and Border Conflicts*, edited by Thomas Diez, Mathias Albert, and Stephan Stetter. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 41.

political configuration.”⁴⁷ However, the UK prefers to think of Northern Ireland as a region of the UK, not as a European region. The British government acknowledges internal diversity, but argues that the interests of all of its regions can be fulfilled and made stronger through unity with each other.⁴⁸ Despite this confusion, there has been some support for a regional approach. After dissatisfaction with the UK delegation in Brussels both nationalists and unionists demanded a more distinct Northern Irish role at the EU level. However, these demands have also been coupled with differing conceptions as to what this role should be.⁴⁹ As a whole, Northern Ireland enjoys much less internal unity than many other European regions. Since European regions that have a high level of internal cohesion are more likely to successfully mobilize at the EU level,⁵⁰ this disunity may be another key reason as to why Northern Ireland has not been able to do so. In 2001, the Northern Ireland Executive established an office in Brussels, but due to the devolved nature of British government, this office operates as part of the UK Permanent Representation to the EU.⁵¹ As such, it does not seem to function with much independence from the UK delegation.

EU influence on the conflict in Northern Ireland has more often taken an indirect form. During the 1970s and 1980s, although the tools the EU had at its disposal with respect to the conflict were limited, structural funds were a primary way for it to have influence. The

⁴⁷Hayward, Katy (2003) “The Region between State and Nation: British and Irish conceptions of Northern Ireland as a European Region.” *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 4(3): 417-445; 439.

⁴⁸Hayward, 422-424, 438.

⁴⁹Ruane and Todd, 287.

⁵⁰Marks et al, 189.

⁵¹Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (2005) “The Office of the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels.” <<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/index/promoting-ni/onieb.htm>>.

fact that EU influence was and remains partly economic is no surprise, since the EU's initial focus was economic integration.

The Commission established the Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in response to the 1994 ceasefires. The EU hoped that this program would provide incentive to resolve the conflict by addressing unemployment and economic underdevelopment that resulted from long-lasting conflict.⁵² From 1995 to 2006, the EU contributed £640 million to Northern Ireland through the PEACE program.⁵³ EU funding has established a number of community projects that stress communication and cooperation between ethnic communities.⁵⁴ The PEACE program was intended to empower civil society by using bottom-up delivery mechanisms rather than top-down distribution. However, the program strategy lacked an understanding of conflict management and the importance of cross-community initiatives, and suffered as a result. The second round of funding sought to correct this flaw. Today, the EU “has finally graduated Northern Ireland from the [PEACE program] and has imposed explicit economically defined priorities lifted from the Lisbon Agenda for future EU funding.”⁵⁵

Other than the PEACE program, the other primary economic tool the EU has employed in Northern Ireland is INTERREG, the EU's program for Europe's borderlands. INTERREG provides funding throughout the EU for programs that promote cooperation between territorial units, often across the borders of two or more member states. All political

⁵²Kuusisto-Arponen, Anna-Kaisa (2002) “Urban Borderlands and the Politics of Place in Northern Ireland” in *Boundaries and Place: European Borderlands in Geographical Context*, edited by David H. Kaplan and Jouni Häkli. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield; 172; Hayward and Wiener, 44.

⁵³Hughes, James (2009) “Paying for Peace: Comparing the EU's Role in the Conflicts in Northern Ireland and Kosovo.” *Ethnopolitics* 8(3): 287-306; 292.

⁵⁴Kuusisto-Arponen, 172.

⁵⁵Hughes, 294-295.

parties in Northern Ireland welcome the economic benefits INTERREG creates. The nationalist parties praise the cross-border cooperation, but all political parties except the SDLP have reservations about INTERREG's political implications. Like the PEACE program, INTERREG has had some problems. INTERREG I and II were largely centralized programs, allowing for little local involvement or consultation, but this was changed in INTERREG III. Despite the problems in INTERREG I and II, EU funding was still critical to the development of grassroots cross-border networks, making them strong enough to demand a larger role in INTERREG III. The cross-border partnerships that INTERREG has helped to forge have enabled cooperation for mutual benefit and have created connections between elites and social partners on both sides of the Ireland-Northern Ireland border. EU involvement in Northern Ireland through the INTERREG program has given the EU additional influence there and altered the domestic situation to favor cross-border economic networks. Unionists, however, still stress that economic cooperation remains secondary to political concerns and worry that increased cross-border cooperation is a Trojan horse leading to Irish reunification. On the nationalist side, the SDLP argues that EU-facilitated cooperation helps to foster reconciliation.⁵⁶ Sinn Féin welcomes the cross-border cooperation and recognizes the impact of EU funding but remains less enthusiastic about European integration in general.⁵⁷

By providing funding to civil society groups and cross-community initiatives, some argue that the EU was able help transform the nationalists' politics "from protest to

⁵⁶Laffan, Brigid and Diane Payne (2003) "INTERREG III and Cross-Border Cooperation in the Island of Ireland." *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 4(3): 447-473; 451-453, 459, 466-467, 469.

⁵⁷Maillot, Agnès (2009) "Sinn Féin's Approach to the EU: Still More 'Critical' than 'Engaged'?" *Irish Political Studies* 24(4): 559-574; 570-571; Laffan and Payne, 469.

participation and lobbying.”⁵⁸ Others have also argued that economic assistance could contribute to the decreasing amount of lobbying for the unification of Ireland and Northern Ireland, even though unionists worry to the contrary. This could be the case for two reasons. First, as noted above, European integration and the establishment of cross-border networks may make reunification less necessary or likely economically. Second, up until the current financial crisis, membership in the EU has significantly improved the Irish economy. In the eyes of some, this has raised concern over uniting a more successful Ireland to a generally economically depressed Northern Ireland.⁵⁹ However, others also argue that integration can further encourage calls for Irish unity.⁶⁰ Still others argue that those who receive EU funds are acutely aware of their origin and that there may be a connection to a decrease in the level of sectarian violence in these areas. The EU funds in Northern Ireland are perceived as building a strong culture of partnership and peace building. Additionally, the EU’s emphasis on economic rights, non-discrimination, and social inclusion has mediated previous levels of economic discrimination in Northern Ireland.⁶¹ However, it has been noted that concerning the outside flow of funding, “the flow from membership in the EU has always been a modest fraction of that resulting from membership in the United Kingdom.”⁶² Overall – with the exception of the SDLP, which fully supports European integration – politicians welcome European funding and recognize what it has achieved, but have differing reservations about

⁵⁸Bean, Kevin (2008) “‘The Economic and Social War Against Violence’: British Social and Economic Strategy and the Evolution of Provisionalism” in *Transforming the Peace Process in Northern Ireland: From Terrorism to Democratic Politics*, edited by Aaron Edwards and Stephen Bloomer. Dublin: Irish Academic Press; 171.

⁵⁹Jesse and Williams, 105.

⁶⁰Goodman, James (1996) *Nationalism and Transnationalism: The national conflict in Ireland and European Union integration*. Aldershot: Avebury; 287-288.

⁶¹Hayward and Wiener, 53-57.

⁶²Kennedy, 164-165.

the wider implications of European integration. Public opinion on the EU and its economic assistance seems to depend on whether or not individuals have benefitted from it personally.

Through the funding described above, the EU has helped to improve the prospects for solving ethnic conflict in Northern Ireland. From the conflict resolution strand, the EU has helped to satisfy the economic needs in Northern Ireland and the Irish borderlands. A stronger economy – a growing economic pie – has significantly lessened competition between unionists and nationalists in this area. From the conflict transformation strand, the EU, through its emphasis on economic rights and non-discrimination, has helped to empower nationalists who had previously been subject to economic discrimination. Additionally, the INTERREG program has established connections between elites and cross-border and cross-community civil society networks, transforming a previously hostile atmosphere to one of cooperation.

In addition to the cross-border relationships established in INTERREG, another common argument concerning the EU's indirect influence is that the mutual membership of Ireland and the UK in the EU has facilitated cooperation that was previously unthinkable. Prior to their inclusion in the EU, the UK and Ireland had a mutually resentful relationship.⁶³ By creating formal equality between Ireland and the UK, mutual involvement in the EU prepared both countries to negotiate and work together on solving the conflict.⁶⁴ Their cooperation essentially reduced the number of conflicting parties from six to four.⁶⁵ This plays directly into the conflict resolution and conflict transformation literature. Cooperation at the European level was influential in helping the UK and Ireland recognize the situation in

⁶³Oberschall, 164.

⁶⁴Jesse and Williams, 105; Kellas, 29; O'Dowd, 43.

⁶⁵Oberschall, 179.

Northern Ireland as a shared problem. In addition to establishing a constructive rather than hostile relationship between Ireland and the UK, European integration transformed the context in which the Northern Ireland conflict occurred.

This argument, however, is not one that has just arisen in hindsight, trying to establish an EU role where it was previously assumed that there was not one. Even at the time, it was argued that the EU was not only providing economic assistance, but was also “offering benefits and imposing penalties that have swayed the attitudes and behaviors of the parties to the conflict.”⁶⁶ The Irish and British governments themselves acknowledge the positive influence of mutual EU membership on their ability to embrace a common agenda and achieve common objectives on this matter.⁶⁷ The EU played a role in “legitimizing the redefinition of Ireland as a single island” without encroaching either Irish or British sovereignty. This development at the EU level allowed the UK and Ireland to discuss the issue and paved the way for the Anglo-Irish Agreement.⁶⁸ Others do not deny this role, but have downplayed it somewhat, arguing for the influence of the US, the progression of the conflict, and continuing UK state contraction and decolonization as additional contributing factors.⁶⁹

Did the EU have any role in Sinn Féin’s decision to distance itself from the IRA and to attempt to solve the conflict through non-violent means? There is actually very little conclusive evidence for this claim. There truly is no consensus as to what key factors led to

⁶⁶Stevenson, Jonathan (1998) “Peace in Northern Ireland: Why Now?” *Foreign Policy* 112: 41-54; 41-42.

⁶⁷Hayward, 435.

⁶⁸Goodman, 189.

⁶⁹McGarry, John (2006) “Europe’s limits: European integration and conflict management in Northern Ireland” in *European Integration and the Nationalities Question*, edited by John McGarry and Michael Keating. Abingdon: Routledge; 281-287.

Sinn Féin's shift away from IRA militarism.⁷⁰ Throughout the peace process, Sinn Féin was excluded from negotiations as a result of actions of IRA activities, so the party stood to gain considerably by distancing itself from the movement. However, they also risked alienating some (albeit a minority of) nationalists by doing so. Despite the fact that Sinn Féin has overtaken the SDLP as the most popular nationalist party in Northern Ireland, the calls for sanctions on Sinn Féin in response to the IRA bank robbery and the murder of Robert McCartney in 2005 showed that, at least in the minds of many, the party was still connected to the IRA.⁷¹ But this connection seems to have eroded further in response to the recent activity of the Continuity IRA and Real IRA, evinced by the comments of prominent Sinn Féin (and former IRA) members Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, who was believed to be a former member of the IRA's Army Council.⁷² In short, Sinn Féin's strategy of distancing itself from the IRA seems to have more to do with being electorally viable and gaining domestic political legitimacy than from any external pressure or influence. In truth, however, other than public statements, there is also no concrete evidence of whether or not Sinn Féin has completely detached itself from activities of the IRA, but it has certainly kept up the public appearance that it has done so.

What seems to be more certain is that it was not likely that EU involvement played a dominant role in Sinn Féin's decision, but may still have a part to play. Unlike the SDLP,

⁷⁰Tonge, Jonathan (2008) "Nationalist Convergence? The Evolution of Sinn Féin and SDLP Politics" in *Transforming the Peace Process in Northern Ireland: From Terrorism to Democratic Politics*, edited by Aaron Edwards and Stephen Bloomer. Dublin: Irish Academic Press; 62.

⁷¹Van Engeland, Anisseh (2008a) "Political Movements in the Making: the Irish Republican Army and Sinn Féin" in *From Terrorism to Politics*, edited by Anisseh Van Engeland and Rachael M. Rudolph. Aldershot: Ashgate Press; 62-64. Adams has long been believed to be a prominent member of the IRA's leadership, but this has never been officially proven and he denies all such claims. McGuinness has never been officially confirmed as an Army Council member, but has admitted to IRA membership. The Army Council was set up in a fashion so that no one, not even other IRA members outside of the other Council members, would know their identity.

⁷²BBC (2009a).

who from the very beginning of accession negotiations supported European integration,⁷³ Sinn Féin, until recently, was vehemently opposed to it. Overall, the party views European integration as an erosion of sovereignty and Irish neutrality and as another way for the UK to gain an upper hand on Ireland. European integration did not *cause* Sinn Féin to distance itself from the IRA, but it has been used as a tool for it to do so. Although Sinn Féin remains critical of many aspects of European integration, in the 1980s it began to see EP elections as a way to boost the party's credibility as an "all-Ireland" party and to maintain the level of activism between local elections.⁷⁴ Also despite its criticism, in the early 1990s, Sinn Féin was not hesitant to appeal to an EU human rights monitoring group, insisting that British involvement in Ireland was "a European issue."⁷⁵

Because of the popularity of European integration in Ireland as opposed to the UK, reevaluation of Sinn Féin's views on integration had the potential to expand the party's popularity in Ireland itself.⁷⁶ Irish levels of support for European integration and recognition of the benefits of EU membership are significantly higher than levels in the UK.⁷⁷ In general, Northern Irish public opinion on the EU tends to be a bit more optimistic compared

⁷³Dixon, Paul (2000) "European Integration and Irish Disunity?" in *Reconcilable Differences: Turning Points in Ethnopolitical Conflict*, edited by Sean Byrne and Cynthia L. Irvin. West Hartford: Kumarian Press; 185.

⁷⁴Frampton, Martyn (2005) "Sinn Féin and the European Arena: 'Ourselves Alone' or 'Critical Engagement'?" *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 16: 235-253; 240, 246; Maillot, 563.

⁷⁵Goodman, 206-207.

⁷⁶Unlike all other parties in Northern Ireland, Sinn Féin is also an active party in Ireland and currently holds four seats in the Dáil Éirann.

⁷⁷European Commission (2010) Standard Eurobarometer 72, October – November 2009. <http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb72/eb72_en.htm>.

to the rest of the UK,⁷⁸ but still short of the levels of support in Ireland, and most political parties in Northern Ireland maintain a Euroskeptic stance.

Despite the fact that issues related to the conflict still arise today, Sinn Féin needed a new issue on which to concentrate following the Good Friday Agreement. The party began to use European integration and related issues as its new battlefield, once again using European issues to test all-Ireland programs and emphasizing the EU values of equality, justice, and freedom. In 2004, the first Sinn Féin MEPs were elected into the EP, one from Ireland and one from Northern Ireland.⁷⁹ Today, Sinn Féin is the only party in the Republic of Ireland that openly and critically questions European integration.⁸⁰ Overall, Sinn Féin seems to accept the inevitability of European integration but has used it as a way to continue its nationalism and distance itself from its violent past. Indeed, a major effect of European integration in Northern Ireland has been to create a new arena for conflict. Views on the EU are integrated into parties' ideologies and EP elections are most commonly fought over local issues.⁸¹

As far as political parties in the conflict are concerned, the major contribution of the EU is a change of context. Whether or not this has helped to transform the conflict in a positive way remains unclear. Most parties in Northern Ireland remain skeptical over European integration, albeit for different reasons. Out of the nationalist and unionist parties of Northern Ireland, the SDLP is the only party to fully embrace European integration. The

⁷⁸European Commission (2008a) Flash Eurobarometer 231, "Attitudes towards the EU in the United Kingdom." <http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_231_en.pdf>; Unfortunately, the most recent edition of this Flash Eurobarometer (274) has discontinued reporting separate figures for all the UK's regions, making a more complete picture of public opinion in Northern Ireland in comparison to the rest of the UK harder to obtain.

⁷⁹Currently, Sinn Féin has only one MEP from Northern Ireland, Bairbre de Brún, and none from Ireland.

⁸⁰Frampton, 235; Maillot, 565-566, 570, 573.

⁸¹Ruane and Todd, 287.

rest are primarily Euroskeptic, attempting to gain what benefits they can out of the EU for their voters, but remaining critical of European integration overall.⁸² What is more common is that these parties see the EU and its institutions as another arena in which to engage each other, primarily using the EU to further their domestic interests. Prior to the Good Friday Agreement, participation at the European level could give nationalists voice that they lacked in the governing of Northern Ireland. After gaining equal participation in Northern Ireland, the European outlet seems to have declined in significance.

Overall, the EU has been able to influence the conflict in Northern Ireland in ways consistent with conflict solving literature. Through structural funding, the EU has helped to fulfill economic needs, allowing focus to shift to other issues, and has helped reduce economic discrimination. EU influence has also helped establish and maintain more cooperative cross-community relationships, as well as a constructive relationship between Ireland and the UK. European integration has provided a change of context for all political parties involved, and provides Sinn Féin in particular another chance to forge a new political identity, both in Northern Ireland and Ireland.

PAÍS VASCO

The peace process between Spain and ETA in the Basque Country has been equally as tumultuous and has overall produced few tangible results compared to the conflict in Northern Ireland. In my case study on the Basque conflict I will first sketch the relationship between the Basque groups and the Spanish government – and describe the many Basque

⁸²See Ganiel, Gladys (2009) ““Battling in Brussels: The DUP and the European Union.” *Irish Political Studies* 24(4): 575-588; McLoughlin, P.J. (2009) “The SDLP and the Europeanization of the Northern Ireland Problem.” *Irish Political Studies* 24(4): 603-619; Murphy, Mary C. (2009) “Pragmatic Politics: The Ulster Unionist Party and the European Union.” *Irish Political Studies* 24(4): 589-602.

nationalist groups that are part of the conflict. Next, I analyze how the EU may have an indirect role in shaping this conflict. I examine the effect of integration on the conflict, including the use of regional mechanisms and how integration affects the nationalist movement, and analyze EU economic efforts and cross-border influence.

Negotiations between the Spanish government and the Basques are made more difficult by Basque challenges to Spanish authority. Basque parties encouraged their voters to abstain from voting on the 1978 Spanish constitution, and 54.5% of the electorate abstained. Consequently, from the perspective of the Basque government, Spain should have no authority there since a majority of total eligible voters did not pass the referendum. Additionally, although 53% of those who voted did so in favor of the Statute of Autonomy, 41% also abstained from that vote.⁸³ The Statute of Autonomy establishes the competencies of Spain's seventeen autonomous communities, including a high level of legislative and executive autonomy. The Basque Country and neighboring Navarra enjoy a particularly high level of self-government – widely considered the highest of any non-state entity in the EU.

The Spanish government first publicly acknowledged that a negotiated settlement was a possibility in the late 1980s.⁸⁴ Negotiations had occurred previously, but largely out of the view of the public.⁸⁵ As with Northern Ireland, the nature of these negotiations was constantly changing due to the debate over whether Spain should be negotiating with ETA, a

⁸³Idoiaga, Gorku Espiau (2006) "The Basque Conflict: New Ideas and Prospects for Peace." United States Institute of Peace Special Report 161. <<http://www.usip.org/files/resources/sr161.pdf>>; 3-4.

⁸⁴Irvin, 197.

⁸⁵Mees, Ludger (2003) *Nationalism, Violence and Democracy: The Basque Clash of Identities*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan; 62-66.

terrorist group, or political entities believed to be connected to it.⁸⁶ The most recent ETA ceasefire, declared in March 2006, purportedly a “permanent ceasefire,” was ended with a bombing in Madrid in 2006,⁸⁷ and was officially declared to be over in June 2007.⁸⁸

Following this collapse, Spanish Prime Minister Zapatero vowed that no negotiations would take place as long as violence continues.⁸⁹ Like the Northern Ireland process, the EU has had very little direct involvement in any negotiations or ceasefires. A major difference in this case is that it explicitly refused to take a leading role in negotiation when Basque separatists urged them to do so.⁹⁰ Throughout the conflict, however, the EU has remained supportive of Basque self-government.⁹¹

While the paramilitary side is quite unified, the nationalist political environment in the Basque Country is more fragmented than in Northern Ireland. There, the SDLP and Sinn Féin dominate the nationalist movement and were never part of a unified nationalist group. In the Basque Country, however, there are numerous nationalist parties, most of which split off from the Partido Nacionalista Vasco (Basque Nationalist Party, PNV) at various points in

⁸⁶Davies, Elizabeth (2004) “Spain spurns offers of talks with Eta’s political wing.” *The Independent*, 16 November.

⁸⁷Muro, Diego. (2008) *Ethnicity and Violence: The Case of Radical Basque Nationalism*. New York: Routledge; 185-186.

⁸⁸Tremlett, Giles (2007) “Eta to end ceasefire at midnight,” *The Guardian*, 5 June. <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/jun/05/spain.gilestremlett>>.

⁸⁹BBC News (2007) “Spain’s PM admits Eta ‘mistake,’” 15 January. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6264027.stm>>.

⁹⁰Spongenberg, Helena (2007) “EU declines peace talks bid from Basque separatists,” *EUObserver*, 7 June. <http://euobserver.com/9/24212?rss_rk=1>.

⁹¹Wolff, Katja (2006) “The Basque Country’s Relation to the European Union – Chaos of Interests or Symbolic Diversity?” Paper presented at the Euroculture Intensive Program, Universidad de Deusto in San Sebastian, Spain, 13-23 February. <<http://www.euroculturemaster.org/pdf/Wolff.pdf>>; 9.

the movement and for various reasons.⁹² Since accession to the EU, all parties have a European component to their platforms, some displaying visions of independence or status equal to EU member states. Over time, the nationalist parties have become more and more divided over end goals (increased autonomy v. secession) and tactics (violent v. non-violent).⁹³

The PNV has historically been supportive of European integration, largely because of the economic benefit derived from it and the EU support for preserving minority cultures and languages and Basque self-government.⁹⁴ Until 1999, the PNV was aligned with the European People's Party (Christian Democratic coalition) at the European level, but has increasingly moved toward the GRN/Green Group-European Free Alliance. In 2000, the Christian Democratic International expelled the PNV from its membership. This essentially isolated them from the European mainstream and has contributed to decreasing legitimacy for the Basque struggle within the EU.⁹⁵

Batasuna (Unity) is the party most closely associated with ETA, emerging from the PNV after the Spanish constitution of 1978.⁹⁶ Other parties like Euskal Ezkerra (Basque Left, EuE) began by breaking off from ETA and renouncing violence, but Batasuna remains the only party with concrete ties to ETA.⁹⁷ Batasuna and ETA completely reject European

⁹²Conversi, Danielle (1997) *The Basques, the Catalans, and Spain: Alternative Routes to Mobilisation*. London: Hurst & Company; 149-152.

⁹³Mansvelt Beck, Jan (2005) *Territory and Terror: Conflicting Nationalisms in the Basque Country*. Abingdon: Routledge; 162, 213.

⁹⁴Wolff, 9.

⁹⁵Mansvelt Beck (2005), 162-163.

⁹⁶Conversi, 150.

⁹⁷Bourne, Angela K. (2008) *The European Union and the accommodation of Basque difference in Spain*. Manchester: Manchester University Press; 40.

integration because they see the autonomy gained through European integration as inadequate.⁹⁸ ETA has continually planned attacks to coincide with prominent EU events, including summits⁹⁹ and the constitutional referendum.¹⁰⁰ Because of its ties to ETA and because it does not condemn ETA's actions, Batasuna itself is classified as a terrorist organization, both within the EU and the US.¹⁰¹ The party was suspended for three years in 2002 and declared illegal by the Spanish Supreme Court in 2003. Any parties that are deemed to have close ties with Batasuna have also been punished.¹⁰² The European Court of Human rights upheld this ban in June 2009.¹⁰³ Prior to the ban, Batasuna had one representative in the EP, two representatives in the Spanish Parliament (until 2000), ruled more than 60 local councils, and had 890 municipal advisors.¹⁰⁴ Despite this, Batasuna was routinely excluded from any peace negotiations. Banning Batasuna has been largely ineffective, since its members continue to voice their opinions and instruct their voters, and often infiltrate other parties to fulfill their objectives.¹⁰⁵ However, Batasuna leaders have

⁹⁸Wolff, 12.

⁹⁹Quesada, Begona (2002) "Seven injured as ETA bombings coincide with EU summit," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 June. <<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/06/22/1023864517335.html>>.

¹⁰⁰Nash, Elizabeth (2005) "Spain says 'yes' to constitution but barely two in five turn out to vote," *The Independent*, 21 February. <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/spain-says-yes-to-constitution-but-barely-two-in-five-turn-out-to-vote-484267.html>>.

¹⁰¹Wolff, 12.

¹⁰²Muro, 172-174.

¹⁰³*The Economist* (2010) "Spain and ETA: Gone fishing," 4 March. <http://www.economist.com/world/europe/displaystory.cfm?story_id=15622351&fsrc=rss>.

¹⁰⁴Van Engeland, Anisseh (2008b) "A Political Movement to Make Peace or War? Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) and Batasuna – the Impossible Truce" in *From Terrorism to Politics*, edited by Anisseh Van Engeland and Rachael M. Rudolph. Aldershot: Ashgate Press; 73-76.

¹⁰⁵Mansvelt Beck, Jan (2008) "The Basque power-sharing experience: from a destructive to a constructive conflict?" *Nations and Nationalism* 14(1): 61-83; 79.

recently hinted at a willingness to abandon its support for ETA violence, but many see this as a Batasuna attempt to assert itself over ETA rather than a willingness to end the violence on principle.¹⁰⁶ Unlike Sinn Féin, Batasuna has made absolutely no shift in its views on the EU, does not see it as a forum to gain legitimacy or influence, and will likely not adjust this view anytime in the near future. Because of this, the EU has had relatively little success regarding conflict management, resolution, or transformation concerning Batasuna.

There are opposing views of whether European integration has proved positive or negative for the Basque region overall. Interestingly, the support for both arguments comes from two specific concepts: Spanish federalism and EU institutions. Some argue that the institutions of the EU give areas like the Basque region a chance to correct any perceived inequality they feel within their member states.¹⁰⁷ This argument is especially made with regard to Spain. Under the federal structure of the state, autonomous communities have guaranteed representation in the Spanish senate, agreements for participation in Spanish delegations at the EU level, and forums in which to voice their opinion on EU matters relevant to their regions (General Commission for Autonomous Communities, sectoral conferences).¹⁰⁸ EU institutions such as the Committee of the Regions allow for more EU-level participation on the part of the Basque community, and the PNV and the Basque government have often taken an active role in such institutions.¹⁰⁹ The Basque community

¹⁰⁶*The Economist*.

¹⁰⁷Jesse and Williams, 51.

¹⁰⁸Bourne (2008), 47-51, 77, 87.

¹⁰⁹A interesting fact is that Northern Ireland's nationalist parties also have these institutions open to them, yet their mention is much less common in literature on Northern Irish nationalism, likely for the reasons noted above as to the difficulty of Northern Ireland as a European region.

has had delegations throughout Europe, including Brussels, since the 1930s.¹¹⁰ The PNV even claims to be represented in the EU and its bodies at the same level as member states.¹¹¹ Although against European integration, Batasuna also maintains an embassy in Brussels, and its presence has actually drawn more attention than the Basque government's delegation.¹¹² With respect to this argument, however, many also contend that, although the EU has increased Basque influence, it still falls short of what Basque nationalists desire.¹¹³

Still, the Basque community has been extremely active at the EU level. From 1999 to 2002, Basque representatives attended more Commission committee meetings than any other Spanish autonomous community. The Basque region was represented in 13 of the 55 committees from 1998 to 2002 and in 14 of 95 committees from 2003 to 2006. While remaining involved in affairs at the EU level, the Basque government remains critical of what it views as too limited a role for European regions at the EU level.¹¹⁴ Given the PNV's increasing isolation from the European mainstream, the legitimacy of the Basque voice at the EU level is decreasing. In March 2009, for the first time in thirty years, the PNV lost control of the Basque regional government to the Socialists,¹¹⁵ and this may change how the region uses European regional mechanisms.

¹¹⁰However, the Basque office today operates more in an economic and business capacity by researching EU mandates rather than pushing for the nationalist cause.

¹¹¹Mansvelt Beck (2005), 147.

¹¹²The Batasuna embassy is run by political exiles with asylum in Belgium and is used to raise awareness of Basque culture and inform EU agencies of alleged human and civil rights abuses in the Basque Country.

¹¹³Jáuregui, Gurutz (2006) "Basque nationalism: Sovereignty, independence and European integration" in *European Integration and the Nationalities Question*, edited by John McGarry and Michael Keating. Abingdon: Routledge; 254-255; Totoricagüena, Gloria P. (2004) *Identity, Culture, and Politics in the Basque Diaspora*. Reno: University of Nevada Press; 95.

¹¹⁴Bourne (2008), 80.

¹¹⁵*The Economist*.

Others argue the opposite, saying that both Spanish federalism and EU institutions actually limit the power of autonomous regions in the Basque case, making the region further unsatisfied and intensifying its conflict with the Spanish government. They argue that the forums where the Basque government is given a voice in EU matters in Spain are still rather experimental and that the central government has a tendency to make decisions on its own without consulting the autonomous regions.¹¹⁶ In reality, then, structures of Spanish federalism that are designed to give the Basque community more voice in EU decision-making are essentially creating more tension between the Basque region and central government, possibly because these forums are not being employed properly. This then exacerbates the Basque region's complaints. Moreover, when Spain transfers sovereignty to the EU in certain issues, this diminishes the competencies of the regions.¹¹⁷ The Basque government wants to control implementation of EU policies within the Basque Country, but this is not always granted.¹¹⁸ The EU, however, maintains that regional matters such as competency over implementation and participation of regions at the EU level is a matter that falls within the jurisdiction of member states. Some fear that the absence of an EU solution to the role of regions will further radicalize the nationalist movement.¹¹⁹

The most recent proposal from the Basque government, the Ibarretxe Plan of 2001, was a direct result of European integration. The plan called for a semi-independent Basque entity loosely linked to Spain, but sharing co-sovereignty. Since European integration

¹¹⁶Darré, Alain (2000) "The Basque Country and Europe: Transfer of Power and the Sovereignty Issue" (translated by Dominique Davison and Robert Hudson) in *Politics of Identity: Migrants and Minorities in Multicultural States*, edited by Robert Hudson and Fred Réno. Basingstoke: Macmillan; 167.

¹¹⁷Jesse and Williams, 51.

¹¹⁸Darré, 169.

¹¹⁹Jáuregui, 256.

involves multiple points of sovereignty and identity, the Basque government was using the language of the EU to negotiate its own demands for concessions. The Ibarretxe Plan shifted the focus from changing borders to changing the significance of borders.¹²⁰ However, reflecting the division among nationalist politicians, the plan only passed the Basque regional parliament by a slim majority. In 2005, the Spanish parliament forcefully rejected this plan as unconstitutional by a vote of 313 to 29.¹²¹ During debate over the plan in the Basque parliament, it became “increasingly evident that the European avenue is not a fruitful one,”¹²² and nationalist parties began to move away from Europe due to a realization of the limits of a “Europe of the Regions.”

Though evidence is mixed, on balance it appears likely that the voice that the EU gives to regions could help to ameliorate the conflict by giving parties a forum outside of Spain to discuss regional solutions. The Basque government has criticisms of EU regional mechanisms, but it has still attempted to use them in order to further empower the region and transform the conflict, giving EU influence the potential for conflict transformation. However, growing disillusionment with a “Europe of the Regions,” the Batasuna hard line on European integration, the imperfections of Spanish federalism, and EU reluctance to weigh in on regional competencies all undermine this potential. It is unlikely that regional mechanisms will provide a path for conflict management or resolution strategies since they would have to involve more overt action, which the EU is reluctant to take in this conflict.

¹²⁰Keating, Michael and Zoe Bray (2006) “Renegotiating Sovereignty: Basque Nationalism and the Rise and Fall of the Ibarretxe Plan.” *Ethnopolitics* 5(4): 347-364; 348-350.

¹²¹Rolfe, Pamela (2005) “Spain Rejects Proposal on Basque Independence.” *The Washington Post* online, 2 February. <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A55430-2005Feb1.html>>.

¹²²Keating and Bray, 350.

Integration has also resulted in a change in the nature of the nationalist movement overall. Virtually all Basque nationalist organizations in Spain, including the PNV, began as ethnically and linguistically exclusive and the region was historically unfriendly to outsiders. Although the Basque region had been subject to waves of immigration before Spain's accession to the EU, integration only heightened these flows. Still today, ETA struggles internally as to whether it should continue to stress the ethnic dimension to its movement or downplay it in order to broaden its appeal.¹²³ Once again, integration is prompting a change of context for the conflict and causing involved parties to reevaluate their strategies, but this transformation may not work in favor of solving the conflict.

Economically, the Basque region was rather prosperous until the 1970s, when a number of factors caused a deep recession. The violence that occurred during the time certainly did not help matters. Before the recession, Basque per capita income was higher than most European averages, and significantly higher than the Spanish average. The recession caused the Basque per capita income to fall below the European average. It was not until the late 1990s that this gap was closed, and the Basque region closed this gap more rapidly than Spain as a whole. The same is true for gross domestic product (GDP) per capita. Unemployment remained a problem.¹²⁴

Overall, there is little literature that directly links the Basque economy's recovery with Spain's accession to the EU in 1986. There is, however, support for the argument that successful economic recovery was contingent on the level of violence occurring,¹²⁵ and was

¹²³Conversi, 53-54, 196-202, 239.

¹²⁴Mees, 82-86.

¹²⁵Abadie, Alberto and Javier Gardeazabal (2003) "The Economic Costs of Conflict: A Case Study of the Basque Country." *The American Economic Review* 93(1): 113-132; 127.

also the result of switching from heavy industry and small family-owned businesses to a more service-based economy.¹²⁶ EU accession opened up more opportunities for foreign trade, but thus far there is little literature that establishes an explicit link between any economic prosperity resulting from EU membership and decreasing levels of violence or radicalization. In the future it is possible that the EU could be influential in the Basque region in matters of unemployment. For example, the EU's operational program for research and development in the Basque Country contributes a small amount to the region's GDP (only 0.6 percent), but will create around 2,700 jobs.¹²⁷ The region is still plagued by the exit of foreign investors as a result of ETA bribe threats made against them.¹²⁸

Like Northern Ireland, Spain is also eligible for INTERREG program. The Basque Country in particular benefits from three INTERREG programs: the Atlantic area, southwest Europe, and Pyrenees programs. The largest of these programs is the Pyrenees program, from which the Basque areas received €10.6 million between 1994 and 2006, and which is the only INTERREG program in the area that is specifically concerned with promoting and reinforcing regional identity.¹²⁹ However, because of persisting differences between Basques in Spain and France (which will be detailed below), INTERREG has not produced the same effect in the Basque Country as in Northern Ireland.

¹²⁶Nordberg, Ilkka (2007) *Regionalism, Capitalism, and Populism: The Basque Nationalist Party, the PNV, and Politico-Economic Power in the Basque Country of Spain, 1980-1998*. Helsinki: Finnish Academy of Science and Letters.

¹²⁷European Commission (2007) "Operational Programme 'Basque Country.'" <http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/country/prordn/details_new.cfm?gv_PAY=ES&gv_reg=682&gv_PGM=1113&LAN=7&gv_PER=2&gv_defL=4>.

¹²⁸Keeley, Graham (2006) "Basque Country pays for Eta's terrorism," *Times Online*, 31 May. <<http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/economics/article669866.ece>>.

¹²⁹Mansvelt Beck (2005), 90.

Basque authorities are well aware of the EU's economic role in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Indeed, ETA and the IRA and Batasuna and Sinn Féin had been in contact with each other repeatedly throughout the latter part of the twentieth century. Basque leaders have continually been pushing for negotiations similar to those in Northern Ireland.¹³⁰ Equally as important, they have sought funds similar to the EU peace funds in Northern Ireland, but the Commission argued that the comparison was unmerited; terrorism had done more damage in Northern Ireland and the economy there was more depressed overall than in the Basque Country.¹³¹ At least two scenarios are a possibility here. Basque leaders may just be petitioning the EU for money in ways that they think will be successful. This is not impossible, but it is also not likely. PEACE funds in Northern Ireland were just that – peace funds. The EU only gave funds to Northern Ireland after the IRA declared and held a ceasefire. In order for the Basque region to receive the same treatment, they would first need to convince ETA to declare and hold a new ceasefire. Another possibility is that Basque leaders genuinely believe that EU programs and funding were making a difference in the Northern Ireland peace process and wanted the same for their region.

Economically, it would be difficult to argue that Spain's membership in the EU has not helped País Vasco at all. However, through its economic mechanisms, the EU has not really been able to achieve effects consistent with conflict solving literature. Although providing a change of context economically, it is not clear that economic prosperity or EU economic programs have truly helped incentivize turning away from violence or helped to

¹³⁰Mees, 128-142.

¹³¹Bourne, Angela K. (2004) "European Integration and Conflict Resolution in the Basque Country, Northern Ireland, and Cyprus" in *The EU and Territorial Politics within Member States: Conflict or Co-operation?*, edited by Angela K. Bourne. Leiden: Brill; 109.

improve the conflict situation. If anything, returned economic prosperity may embolden the region to further confront the central government.

As with the conflict in Northern Ireland, the Basque conflict has a cross-border element. The Basque provinces of Alava, Guipúzcoa, Vizcaya,¹³² and Navarra lie within Spain. Labourd, Basse-Navarre, and Soule are all part of the southern French department Pyrénées-Atlantiques. Batasuna is the only Basque party that wishes for complete independence of these areas from Spain and France. The PNV is satisfied with autonomy within Spain, giving little consideration to unification with the French provinces. Before European integration, the division of the Basque community between Spain and France resulted in a general lack of unity overall and lack of radicalization in France.¹³³ The PNV, Batasuna, and Eusko Alkartasuna (EA, Basque Solidarity, which split from the PNV) had established French counterparts that still exist today, but these counterparts do not fully subscribe to the same platforms as the parties in Spain, and cross-border coordination between parties has waned.¹³⁴ The major cross-border accomplishment of European integration thus far has been vastly improved cargo transportation networks.¹³⁵

European integration, then, has proved to be somewhat of a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it significantly advantages both the Spanish and French states, which are now able to cooperate on the capture and prosecution of ETA members in a manner that was not

¹³²These three provinces comprise the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, or País Vasco. Navarra, despite historically being a Basque province, has been kept separate as a result of the insistence of its own representatives. (Overall, Navarra tends to be less radical than the other Basque provinces.) Those who seek the independence of the Basque Country include Navarra in their efforts.

¹³³Bourne (2004), 119.

¹³⁴Bray, Zoe (2006) "Basque Militant Youths in France." *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 12(3/4): 533-553; 543; Mansvelt Beck, 88-89.

¹³⁵Raento, Pauliina (2002) "Urban Borderlands and the Politics of Place in Northern Ireland" in *Boundaries and Place: European Borderlands in Geographical Context*, edited by David H. Kaplan and Jouni Häkli. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield; 96-100.

possible before.¹³⁶ At the same time, however, the free movement of people and increased levels of interaction could result in the radicalization of the Basques in France, but so far there is little evidence of this. Prior to Spanish accession to the EU, a militant group arose in the French Basque Country and remained active from 1975 until the late 1980s, so an element of militancy predates Spain's EU involvement.¹³⁷ While European integration has reduced the significance of physical borders, those borders still seem to exist mentally between the Basque populations. This is partially due to differences in socialization between Basques in Spain and France and also due to differences between the French and Spanish states regarding recognition of minorities and general state structure.¹³⁸ Because of this, divisions between their Basque populations continue and cross-border exchanges remain asymmetric.¹³⁹

As far as cross-border relations are concerned, EU influence has had negligible effect on the conflict along the lines of conflict solving strategy. The EU has not had cross-border success like in Northern Ireland, probably due to the differing context of the conflicts. On the positive side, EU cross-border efforts have not aided further radicalization thus far.

Overall, EU influence in this case stands in stark contrast to that of Northern Ireland. This influence – or lack thereof – translates into very few of the strategies for dealing with

¹³⁶In fact, France has been responsible for the capture of two high-profile members of ETA in recent years [see BBC News (2009c) "France holds Eta 'military chief,'" 19 April. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8006511.stm>> and BBC News (2008) "France holds 'Eta military head,'" 17 November. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7732678.stm>>]. Five ETA leaders were captured between 2008 and early 2010, and because of high police pressure on ETA in France, the group has tried to set up camp in Portugal with limited success (see *The Economist*).

¹³⁷Bray, 544.

¹³⁸France, unlike Spain, does not recognize minority cultures or languages within its borders, preferring to look at France as a unified republic of the French. As a result, Basques in France face a cultural and linguistic threat that that Basques in Spain no longer face. Additionally, Basques in Spain live in their own autonomous region, whereas French Basques comprise only a small part of a larger department in the French state.

¹³⁹Bray, 541-543; Mansvelt Beck (2005), 86-87; Raento, 112-113.

ethnic conflict. The EU has had no effect in conflict management, refusing to mediate in negotiations. Similarly, it has had no effect in conflict resolution, failing to satisfy the needs of the region or facilitate cooperation between Spain and País Vasco on the conflict. Within conflict transformation, European regional mechanisms have some potential to transform the conflict, but this transformation has been undermined, and EU membership has not provided a meaningful change of context. However, support for cultural and linguistic preservation and Basque self-government in Spain is still important. An absence of any of these would cause the Basque community to feel further threatened. Given differences between Basques in Spain and France and differences in state structures, European integration has not provided a meaningful change of context for cross-border co-ethnic interaction either, but has made it easier for Spain and France to cooperate against ETA.

FYR MACEDONIA

Macedonia differs from the previous cases in two ways: 1) it is outside of the EU, and 2) it is the only case to recently progress toward all-out war. In this case study, I first sketch the EU role in the 2001 peace process. Next, I evaluate the EU's political influence in Macedonia, both influence gained through the peace process and influence gained through the EU accession process. Finally, I turn to an analysis of EU economic assistance before examining EU influence on the cross-border situation in the conflict.

In 2001, the National Liberation Army (NLA), an Albanian insurgent group, carried out a campaign against Macedonian security forces.¹⁴⁰ Some have suggested that both Macedonians and Albanians fear that Macedonia's leaders "may have willingly pulled their

¹⁴⁰Rossos, Andrew (2008) *Macedonia and the Macedonians: A History*. Stanford: Hoover Institution; 280.

country into the conflict to hide large-scale theft of state-owned enterprises and assets.”¹⁴¹ The insurgency ended after the US and the EU, assuming a traditional conflict management role, stepped in to mediate a ceasefire in July 2001, culminating in the Ohrid Framework Agreement in August 2001. The Ohrid Agreement called for constitutional and legislative reform to expand the rights and representation of minorities, particularly that of Albanians. In exchange, the NLA would completely disarm, its members receiving amnesty or leaving the country.¹⁴² While the negotiations were a joint EU-US effort, the EU had the lead and remains the main international coordinator for Ohrid implementation.

Elites in Macedonia recognized the immense benefits of EU membership for Macedonia – and NATO membership was also valued, partly because it was seen as a stepping-stone to EU membership. As a result, these elites were willing to cooperate with EU leaders in finding a solution – and were willing to give the EU an important role in enforcing any agreement. However, the agreement did complicate political stabilization “by making Macedonia one of the last truly multi-ethnic states in the Balkans.”¹⁴³ In its third party role, the EU used both conflict management and resolution strategies, stressing the conflicting parties’ shared needs and the importance of working together toward a mutually profitable goal.

¹⁴¹Pearson, Brenda (2002) “Putting Peace into Practice: Can Macedonia’s New Government Meet the Challenge?” United States Institute of Peace Special Report 96. <<http://www.usip.org/files/resources/sr96.pdf>>; 13.

¹⁴²Rossos, 280.

¹⁴³Chivvis, Christopher S. (2008) “The Making of Macedonia.” *Survival* 50(2): 141-162; 141-142, 147-149, 155.

As with the Northern Ireland process, not everyone was satisfied with this outcome, and NLA splinter groups have emerged.¹⁴⁴ Few take note of the fact that the NLA itself was not involved in negotiations or a signatory to the Agreement. Only ethnic Albanian political parties were signatories.¹⁴⁵ However, the EU and US both understood that the Albanian parties were in contact with the NLA and NATO also had direct contact with the NLA.¹⁴⁶ In reality, even without being party to negotiations, “the consequent engagement of the West bettered the NLA’s position domestically in far less time than legitimate political negotiations could.”¹⁴⁷

These facts make the situation in Macedonia very fragile, and not all are happy with the results that have been produced. In the September 2001 elections, the coalition in power during the insurgency and Ohrid negotiations was voted out of office. Many citizens view the Ohrid Agreement with a general level of distrust and considered the election results to be a rejection of EU and US efforts.¹⁴⁸ This discontent continues today, both over the original terms and the implementation of the Agreement. Ethnic Macedonians agree that some of the Albanian concerns prior to the 2001 conflict were legitimate, but claim to only have accepted the compromises of the Ohrid Agreement to avoid a descent back into war. It is now the ethnic Macedonians who feel threatened, worrying that Albanians are only concerned with their own freedoms and not the rights of other ethnic groups in Macedonia. Albanians, overall supportive of the Agreement’s provisions, are dissatisfied with delays in

¹⁴⁴Phillips, John (2004) *Macedonia: Warlords and Rebels in the Balkans*. New Haven: Yale University; 177.

¹⁴⁵Carpenter, Ted Galen (2002) “Kosovo and Macedonia: The West Enhances the Threat,” *Mediterranean Quarterly* 13(1): 21-37; 30.

¹⁴⁶Chivvis, 145.

¹⁴⁷Pearson, 13.

¹⁴⁸Liotta P. H. and Cindy R. Jebb (2004) *Mapping Macedonia: Idea and Identity*. Westport: Praeger; 96.

implementation.¹⁴⁹ The Agreement has also been criticized as “[solving] the *casus belli* between the two leading groups, but... not [tackling] the ethnic problem at its roots,”¹⁵⁰ a common criticism of third party conflict management. However, it would be unfair to characterize the totality of EU influence in this way given the amount of minority rights mechanisms necessary for EU accession.

Macedonia is also the only case considered here where external forces were brought in to safeguard peace agreements. As a result of provisions in the Agreement, NATO deployed 3,500 troops to Macedonia for peacekeeping. In March 2003, the EU took over this role, launching Operation Concordia, the EU’s first military mission. EUPOL Proxima then replaced Operation Concordia in December 2003.¹⁵¹ The main goal of Proxima was police reform. Proxima ended in December 2005, but the Council has remained involved in police reform in Macedonia.¹⁵²

The EU’s involvement in negotiating the Ohrid Agreement gave the EU political influence in Macedonia. Indirectly, EU influence helped to create a new political party, the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), which quickly gained the support of Albanians in Macedonia. Part of the Agreement stipulated that the NLA give up their armed struggle.

¹⁴⁹For a more extensive discussion of the continued discontent over the Ohrid Agreement, see Bardos, Gordon N. (2008) “The Regional and International Implications of Kosovo Independence,” *Mediterranean Quarterly* 19(4): 54-67; 58; Brunnbauer, Ulf (2002) “The Implementation of the Ohrid Agreement: Ethnic Macedonian Resentments,” *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*. <<http://www.ecmi.de/jemie/download/Focus1-2002Brunnbauer.pdf>>; 7-17; Phillips, 188-200; and Ragaru, Nadège (2008) “The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: between Ohrid and Brussels” in “Is there an Albanian question?” *Chaillot Paper 107*, edited by Judy Batt. European Union Institute for Security Studies; 47-49.

¹⁵⁰Ciambra, Andrea (2008) “‘Normative power’ Europe: theory and practice of EU norms. The case of Macedonia.” *Jean Monnet Working Papers in Comparative and International Politics* No. 64. <<http://www.fscpo.unict.it/EuroMed/jmwp64.pdf>>; 16.

¹⁵¹Lungescu, Oana (2003) “EU’s first military mission ends,” *BBC News*, 15 December. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3321637.stm>>.

¹⁵²Merlingen, Michael and Rasa Ostrauskaite (2006) *European Union Peacebuilding and Policing: Governance and the European Security and Defence Policy*. Abingdon: Routledge; 79-102.

There had been other Albanian nationalist parties, the Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP) and the Democratic Party of Albania (DPA), prior to this. The PDP had been part of a coalition government in Macedonia from 1992 to 1998; the DPA was also part from 1998 to 2002. The presence of Albanians in high levels of government was not a new development following the Ohrid Agreement. The influence of the Albanian parties within these coalitions varied.¹⁵³ Following the Ohrid Agreement, former NLA leader Ali Ahmeti envisioned the Albanian parties working together in a coordinating council. The DPA tried to gain control of this council, and when that failed, it tried to undermine Ahmeti in whatever manner possible. After this, Ahmeti formed the DUI.¹⁵⁴ The DUI, as its name suggests, supports European integration. In the 2002 elections, the DUI won 6 percent of the vote and was part of a coalition government with the Social Democrats.¹⁵⁵ Following the 2006 elections, the DUI, despite winning the most seats of any Albanian party, was left out of the coalition government in favor of the DPA. In response, the DUI boycotted the legislature and implied that if democratic principles were not respected, a return to arms was possible.¹⁵⁶ Despite the fact that they have similar political agendas, the DUI and DPA continue to be fierce, and sometimes violent, rivals.¹⁵⁷ Since ethnic Albanian parties existed and had some influence before the conflict, one could not argue that the EU newly empowered these

¹⁵³Barany, Zoltan (2005) "Ethnic Mobilization in the Postcommunist Context: Albanians in Macedonia and the East European Roma" in *Ethnic Politics after Communism*, edited by Zoltan Barany and Robert G. Moser. Ithaca: Cornell University Press; 92.

¹⁵⁴Rusi, Iso (2004) "From Army to Party: The Politics of the NLA" in *The 2001 Conflict in FYROM: Reflections*, Institute of War & Peace Reporting, Defence Academy of the United Kingdom. <[http://www.da.mod.uk/colleges/arag/document-listings/balkan/csrc_mpf-2004-07-22/04\(15\)-Chap1-JP.pdf](http://www.da.mod.uk/colleges/arag/document-listings/balkan/csrc_mpf-2004-07-22/04(15)-Chap1-JP.pdf)>; 13-14.

¹⁵⁵Pond, Elizabeth (2006) *Endgame in the Balkans: Regime Change, European Style*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution; 177; Phillips, 162-163.

¹⁵⁶Ragaru, 52.

¹⁵⁷Ilievski, Zoran and Dane Taleski (2009) "Was the EU's Role in Conflict Management in Macedonia a Success?" *Ethnopolitics* 8(3): 355-367; 359.

parties. However, the EU did help to transform the conflict by changing the nature of its actors, specifically having a hand in turning the NLA from violence to politics.

In addition to facilitating the NLA's shift from violence to politics, the EU plays another crucial role in Macedonia, both politically and economically. Overall, the Macedonian public is very supportive of European integration, with over 90 percent in favor.¹⁵⁸ This support for integration has united Macedonians to work towards a "stable, prosperous, and wealthy Macedonia."¹⁵⁹ Just months before the Ohrid Agreement was signed, the EU and Macedonia signed a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA), which entered into force in April 2004. Macedonia was granted EU candidate status in 2005, and in February 2008, the EU and Macedonia signed an Accession Partnership.¹⁶⁰ The signing of the SAA is considered one of the crucial incentives for a peaceful resolution to the crisis during Ohrid negotiations.¹⁶¹ The DUI stresses the importance of the joint quest for EU membership by both Slavic and Albanian parties. They feel membership would ensure the rights of Albanians and give the government as a whole more incentive for economic development and reform.¹⁶² In this way, in a conflict resolution sense, European integration encourages all Macedonians, regardless of ethnicity, to work together to make accession a success. In a conflict transformation sense, it also provides ethnic Albanians with a sense of

¹⁵⁸Euractiv (2007) "Macedonia 'ready to open accession negotiations,'" interview with Gabriela Konevska-Trajkovska, 13 July. <<http://www.euractiv.com/en/enlargement/macedonia-ready-open-accession-negotiations/article-165530>>.

¹⁵⁹Risteska, Marija (2007) "The Macedonian Accession to the European Union." Institute for European Policy, Centre for Research and Policy Making. <<http://www.europeum.org/doc/pdf/860.pdf>>; 19.

¹⁶⁰European Commission (2008b) "EU – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia relations." <http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/candidatecountries/the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia/index_en.htm>.

¹⁶¹Ilievski and Taleski, 357.

¹⁶²Pond, 177.

recognition and freedom from fear that their rights will be violated. Additionally, European integration provides a transformation of context, structures, and issues.

The EU is an incredibly important economic partner for Macedonia. Since the SAA, EU countries account for 60 percent of total imports and 47 percent of total exports in Macedonia. In 2007, the EU was responsible for 75 percent of foreign direct investment (FDI) flows into Macedonia, and FDI continues to increase year to year.¹⁶³ Even before the insurgency, the EU provided important economic assistance. From 1992 to 1996, Macedonia received €85 million as part of the PHARE Critical Aid Programme. From 1996 to 1999, it received a further €105 million under the Multi-annual Indicative Programme. Since 2001, EU-funded programs have increased in volume, totaling over €300 million, much of which was targeted specifically on minority issues and conflict management. Overall, EU funding has been critical to the implementation of the Ohrid Agreement, and the EU has often conditioned aid delivery on the content of constitutional amendments or other issues.¹⁶⁴ By helping to fulfill Macedonia's economic needs while still ensuring that minority needs are met, the EU is able to contribute to conflict resolution and transformation.

Progress has been made, but there is still much progress to achieve. Had the US and EU not stepped in and ended the conflict in 2001, Macedonia would not likely have been able to take the path it has toward European integration. In addition to the openness of the Macedonian economy, EU conditionality has and will continue to contribute to economic, political, and social reform in Macedonia.¹⁶⁵ Thus far, the prospect of EU membership has

¹⁶³European Commission (2008b).

¹⁶⁴Chivvis, 154; Ilievski and Taleski, 360-361.

¹⁶⁵Risteska, 11-12.

created “momentum toward market-oriented policies and institutions.”¹⁶⁶ Conditionality helps apply pressure for reforms that would not have happened or would have taken much longer otherwise, but can also potentially create a sense of injustice when it touches upon sensitive matters.¹⁶⁷ While regarded as a highly effective way to change the behavior of states towards minorities, it can also be difficult to assess whether conditionality is truly responsible for subsequent changes.¹⁶⁸ Conditionality is one of the reasons that the EU cannot be considered a “powerless” third party. At present, however, the incentive structure for both NATO and EU membership for Macedonia is undermined by the Greek veto regarding its dispute over Macedonia’s name.¹⁶⁹

While the EU has had significant impact in political, economic, and judicial reform in Macedonia, problems still remain. The DUI was severely reprimanded at the EU level for its actions following the 2006 elections, and the EU has made clear that any similar actions could threaten Macedonia’s candidacy.¹⁷⁰ Elections in 2008 were also shrouded in controversy after violence broke out between followers of the DUI and the DPA.¹⁷¹ After

¹⁶⁶Chivvis, 154.

¹⁶⁷Anastasakis, Othon (2008) “The EU’s political conditionality in the Western Balkans: towards a more pragmatic approach.” *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 8(4): 365-377; 365.

¹⁶⁸Wilkinson, Steven I. (2005) “Conditionality, Consociationalism, and the European Union” in *From Power Sharing to Democracy: Post-conflict Institutions in Ethnically Divided Societies*, edited by Sid Noel. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press; 240, 247.

¹⁶⁹Ilievski and Taleski, 365.

¹⁷⁰Lungescu, Oana (2007) “EU warns Macedonia over entry,” BBC News, 9 February. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6344907.stm>>.

¹⁷¹Bilefsky, Dan (2008) “Violence Erupts in Macedonian Election,” *The New York Times*, 2 June. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/02/world/europe/02macedonia.html?_r=2>.

harsh warnings from the EU following the 2008 elections, the 2009 elections passed without incident.¹⁷²

There are other potential sources of conflict as well. The political environment in Macedonia is likely to change in the coming decades. If current demographic trends in Macedonia hold, Albanians will become the majority ethnic group, possibly changing the dynamic of politics and ethnic relations in Macedonia.¹⁷³ Within the accession process, the EU can have direct influence on the political and minority rights system in Macedonia. Any setbacks in any of the reform areas of the EU *acquis communautaire* now have the potential to sideline Macedonia's negotiations on EU membership.

As with the other cases considered here, there is also a cross-border element in which the EU can have influence. Although the origins of the NLA are somewhat unclear, during the 2001 insurgency, many members of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) crossed the border into Macedonia to fight as part of the NLA.¹⁷⁴ Some assert that Kosovo-Albanian leaders are now ready to sever ties with Macedonian Albanians if it will gain them favor on the international stage. Regardless of whether or not this is true, in Macedonian politics, Kosovo remains a controversial and influential topic. Arguments have been made both in favor and against the idea that the armed conflict in Macedonia was a domino effect or spillover from the Kosovo crisis.¹⁷⁵ Others fear that Albanians in Albania, Kosovo, and Macedonia wish to see their lands united as a "Greater Albania," but this theory, too, has its

¹⁷²Euractiv (2009) "Quiet vote comforts Macedonia's EU bid," 23 March. < <http://www.euractiv.com/en/enlargement/quiet-vote-comforts-macedonia-eu-bid/article-180541>>.

¹⁷³Bardos, 59.

¹⁷⁴Rusi, 1, 12.

¹⁷⁵Chivvis, 143; Ilievski and Taleski, 357.

opponents.¹⁷⁶ In addition to these relationships, a number of other cross-border elements are important for Macedonia. As scholar Zlatko Isakovic notes:

Bulgaria is the main identity threat [to Macedonia] to the extent that identity is anchored in language; Serbs are the main identity threat to the extent that identity is anchored in religion; Albanians [are] the main identity threat to the extent that identity is anchored in statehood; and Greeks [are the main identity threat] to the extent that identity is anchored in the name of the nation, its language and state.¹⁷⁷

Given previous and current EU activity in the Balkans, it will remain a crucial element in managing relations in the region.

Overall, out of any of my case studies, the EU has been able to achieve the most results in Macedonia. The EU stepped in as a third party in negotiations, but is not a “powerless” third party. Through its involvement in Ohrid negotiations and through the process of EU accession, the EU has tremendous influence in Macedonia. The EU has been able to satisfy Macedonia’s economic needs while also securing rights for minorities and encouraging cross-community cooperation. The full potential of the EU’s cross-border influence remains underdeveloped, but how the EU addresses cross-border politics in the future could significantly affect the situation in Macedonia.

¹⁷⁶Bardos, 60; Chivvis, 143.

¹⁷⁷Quoted in Ilievski and Taleski, 364.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

The case studies above have shown that the EU can have influence on ethnic conflict in Europe and that this influence can fit in with existing conflict solving theory. In Northern Ireland, the EU has been able to foster constructive relationships between the UK and Ireland, between elites and cross-border social and economic networks, and between ethnic communities. Through its structural funding in Northern Ireland, the EU has helped to alleviate economic needs and reduce economic discrimination. European integration has produced a change of context for the conflict, giving rise to issues that have helped Sinn Féin distance itself from the IRA's violent past.

The picture from País Vasco is a bit bleaker. Other than providing the Basques a voice at the EU level and supporting cultural and linguistic preservation, the EU seems to have affected the conflict little with respect to existing theory. It has failed and even refused to facilitate cooperation between the Basque and Spanish governments and has not provided a meaningful change of context. Regional mechanisms are available to the Basques, and they do make use of these mechanisms, but find them lacking overall. The fragmentation of the nationalist movement and the continuing Batasuna hard line on EU legitimacy undermine potential EU influence on the conflict.

In Macedonia, the EU stepped in as a conflict manager, chairing negotiations as a third party, but not necessarily a "powerless" one. Through its economic assistance and

political conditionality, the EU has helped to fulfill the economic needs of both communities as well as securing rights for the Albanian minority and stressing the need for ethnic communities to work together toward EU accession. Out of all of three cases, the EU can place the most direct pressure on Macedonia because of accession conditionality. However, the cross-border situation is the most complicated in this case. How the EU addresses current and future political debates in the Balkans will be crucial in determining its continued cross-border influence in Macedonia.

What overall conclusions can be drawn from this? Based on my research, I conclude two things. First, as shown by the stark differences between the Northern Irish and Basque case studies, context will affect what role the EU can play and whether this role is consistent with existing conflict solving theory. In Northern Ireland, the conflict is not just a case of conflict between nationalists and the British government, but also of nationalists against their fellow Northern Irish unionists. In País Vasco, the conflict is different, primarily waged between the Basque region and the Spanish government. Although different groups of Basque nationalists may disagree about tactics (violence v. politics) and end goals (independence v. increased autonomy), the region is relatively unified, especially when compared to Northern Ireland. In addition to the absence of intra-regional ethnic conflict, differences in state structure also affect how the EU can influence the conflicts. In the Basque case, the EU is very insistent of Spain's sovereignty, much more so than it was in the Northern Irish case. The fact that Batasuna remains so vehemently against the EU and has not shifted its approach like Sinn Féin also affects its influence in the Basque conflict. Still, for all three cases, any wrong move by a nationalist party regarding ethnic violence or European issues can drive voters to their nationalist political competitors.

Second, the differences between the case studies highlight the contrast in action inside and outside of the EU. The EU would not take a direct mediating role in either Northern Ireland or País Vasco, stressing member state sovereignty as mentioned above. Outside of the EU, however, this does not seem to be much of an issue, since the EU stepped in to fulfill this role in Macedonia. Additionally, the conditionality associated with EU accession will make EU influence more direct in candidate states than in member states.

This analysis also leaves opportunities for further research. EU influence on ethnic conflict could be further evaluated by additional member state case studies where violence has not been the norm. This would help to examine whether or not EU influence as described in this analysis can apply to non-violent ethnic conflict in member states. In all three case studies, EU influence has primarily been a by-product of European integration or accession. Other than that, the Macedonian case study, as noted above, was the only case where the EU has exerted direct influence with respect to the conflict. Further case studies of EU influence on violent ethnic conflict outside of Europe would evaluate whether the EU will be able to have the same influence if EU membership is not a prospect for the country in question.

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